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A LITTLE SWISS SOJOURN

BY

W. D. HOWELLS.

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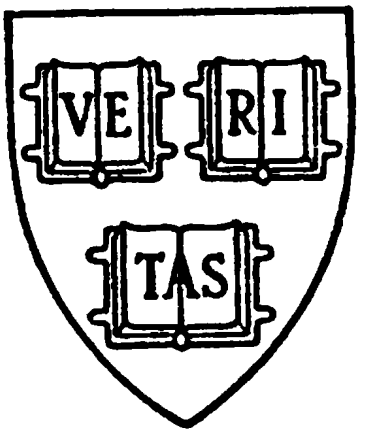

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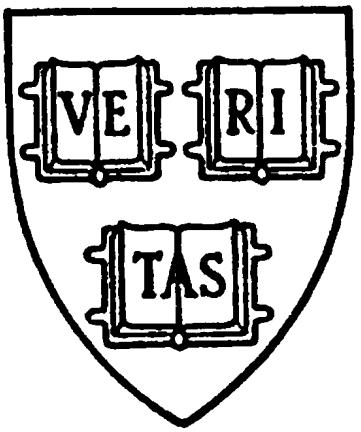

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A LITTLE SWISS SOJOURN

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Tourists at Montreux. (p. 102)

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A LITTLE SWISS SOJOURN

BY

W. D. HOWELLS

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1902

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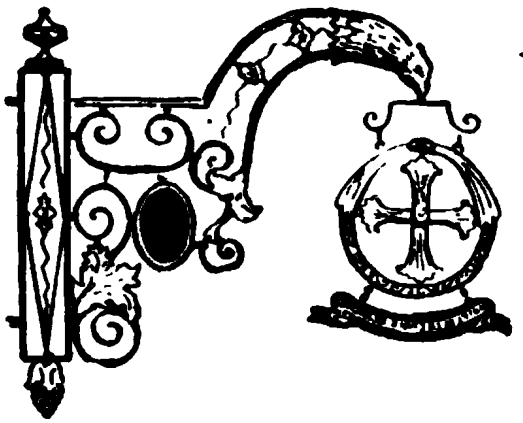
I



Sign of the White Cross Inn

BUT of eighty or ninety days that we passed in Switzerland there must have been at least ten that were fair, not counting the forenoons before it began to rain, and the afternoons when it cleared up. They said that it was an unusually rainy autumn, and we could well believe it; yet I suspect that it rains a good deal in that little corner of the Canton Vaud even when the autumn is only usually rainy. We arrived late in September and came away early in December, and during that time we had neither the fevers that raged in France nor the floods

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that raged in Italy. We Vaudois were rather proud of that, but whether we had much else to be proud of I am not so certain. Of course we had our Alpine scenery, and when the day was fair the sun came loafing up over the eastern mountains about ten o'clock in the morning, and lounged down behind the western tops about half-past three, after dinner. But then he left the eternal snows of the Dent-du-Midi all flushed with his light, and in the mean time he had glittered for five hours on the "*bleu impossible*" of the Lake of Geneva, and had shown in a hundred changing lights and shadows the storied and sentimentalized towers of the Castle of Chillon. Solemn groups and ranks of Swiss and Savoyard Alps hemmed the lake in as far as the eye could reach, and the lateen-sailed craft lent it their picturesqueness, while the steamboats constantly making its circuit and stopping at all the little towns on the shores imparted a pleasant modern interest to the whole effect, which the trains of the railroad running under the lee of the castle agreeably heightened.

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II

The Swiss railroad was always an object of friendly amusement with the children, who could not get used to having the trains started by a small Christmas-horn. They had not entirely respected the English engine, with the shrill falsetto of its whistle, after the burly roar of our locomotives; and the boatswain's pipe of the French conductor had considerably diminished the dignity of a sister republic in their minds; but this Christmas-horn was too droll. That a grown man, much more imposingly uniformed than an American general, should blow it to start a real train of cars was the source of patriotic sarcasm whenever its plaintive, reedy note was heard. We had come straight through from London, taking the sleeping-car at Calais, and rolling and bounding over the road towards Basle in a fashion that provoked scornful comparisons with the Pullman that had carried us so smoothly from Boston to Buffalo. It is well to be honest, even to our own adulation, and one must confess that the sleeping-car of the Euro-

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pean continent is but the nervous and hysterical daughter of the American mother of sleeping-cars. Many express trains are run without any sleeper, and the charges for berths are ludicrously extravagant—five dollars apiece for a single night. It is not strange that the native prefers to doze away the night bolt-upright, or crouched into the corners of his repellently padded carriage, rather than toss upon the expensive pallet of the sleeping-car, which seems hung rather with a view to affording involuntary exercise than promoting dear-bought slumber. One advantage of it is that if you have to leave the car at five o'clock in the morning, you are awake and eager to do so long before that time. At the first Swiss station we quitted it to go to Berne, which was one of the three points where I was told by the London railway people that my baggage would be examined. I forget the second, but the third was Berne, and now at Delemont I looked about for the customs officers with the anxiety which the thought of them always awakens in the human heart, whether one has meant to smuggle or not. Even the good conscience may suffer from the upturning of

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a well-packed trunk. But nobody wanted to examine our baggage at Delemont, or at the other now-forgotten station; and at Berne, though I labored hard in several dialects with all the railway officials, I could not get them to open one of our ten trunks or five valises. I was so resolute in the matter that I had some difficulty to keep from opening them myself and levying duty upon their contents.

III

It was the first but not the last disappointment we suffered in Switzerland. A friend in London had congratulated us upon going to the Vaud in the grape season. "For thruppence," he said, "they will let you go into the vineyards and eat all the grapes you can hold." Arrived upon the ground, we learned that it was six francs fine to touch a grape in the vineyards; that every field had a watch set in it, who popped up between the vines from time to time, and interrogated the vicinity with an eye of sleepless vigilance; and that small boys of suspicious character, whose pleasure or business took

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them through a vineyard, were obliged to hold up their hands as they passed, like the victims of a Far Western road agency. As the laws and usages governing the grape culture run back to the time of the Romans, who brought the vine into the Vaud, I was obliged to refer my friend's legend of cheapness and freedom to an earlier period, whose customs we could not profit by. In point of fact, I could buy more grapes for thruppence in London than in the Vaud; and the best grapes we had in Switzerland were some brought from Italy, and sold at a franc a pound in Montreux to the poor foreigners who had come to feast upon the wealth of the local vineyards.

It was the rain that spoiled the grapes, they said at Montreux, and wherever we complained; and indeed the vines were a dismal show of sterility and blight, even to the spectator who did not venture near enough to subject himself to a fine of six francs. The foreigners had protected themselves in large numbers by not coming, and the natives who prosper upon them suffered. The stout lady who kept a small shop of ivory carvings at Montreux continually

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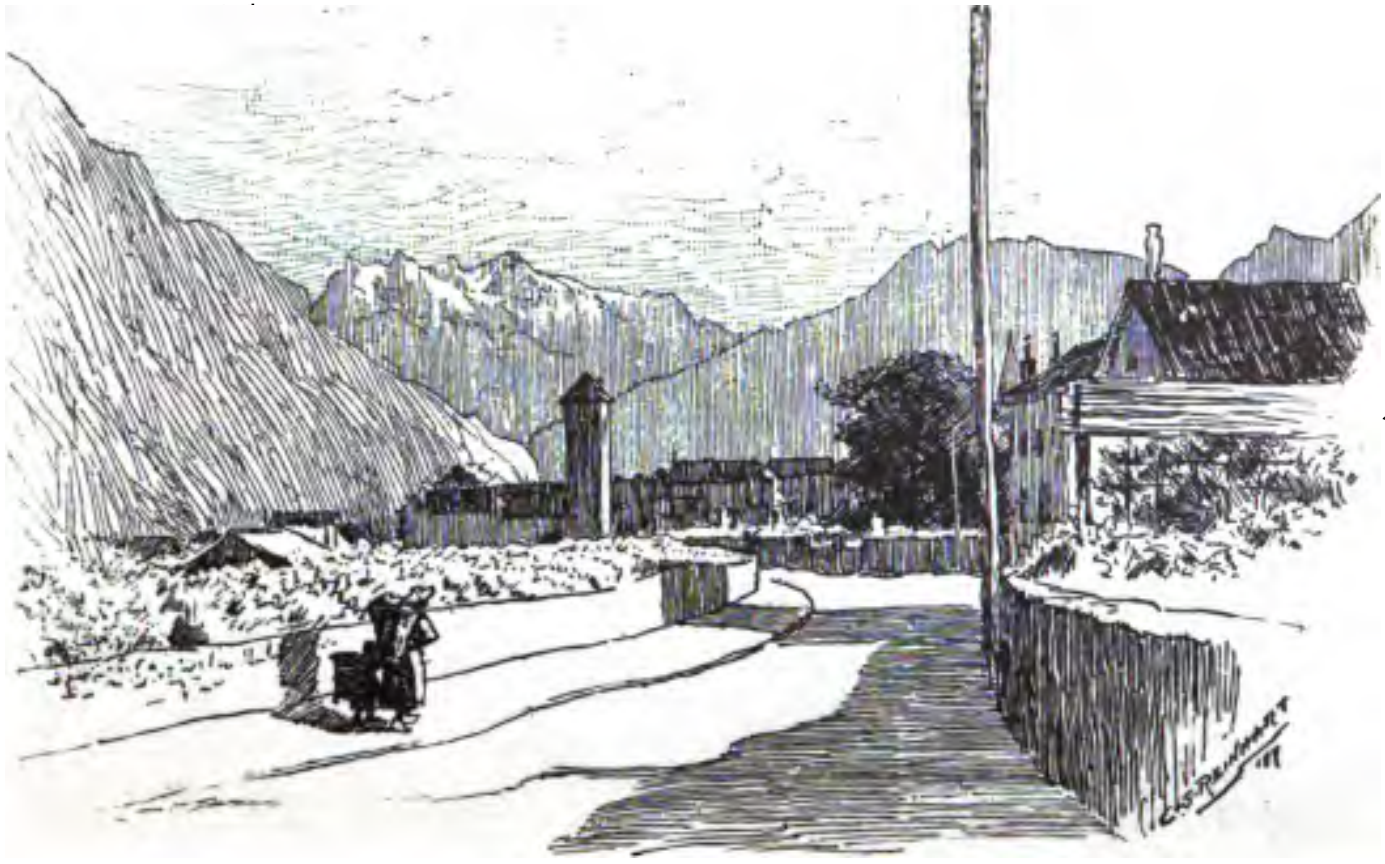

Entrance to Villeneuve

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lamented their absence to me: "Die Fremden kommen nicht, dieses regenes Wetter! Man muss Geduldt haben! Die Fremden kommen nicht!" She was from Interlaken, and the accents of her native dialect were flavored with the strong waters which she seemed always to have been drinking, and she put her face close up to that of the good, all-sympathizing Amerikaner who alone patronized her shop, and talked her sorrows loudly into him, so that he should not misunderstand.

IV

But one must not be altogether unreasonable. When we first came in sight of the lake the rain lifted, and the afternoon sun gushed out upon a world of vineyards. In other words, the vines clothe all the little levels and vast slopes of the mountain-sides as far up as the cold will let the grapes grow. There is literally almost no other cultivation, and it is a very pretty sight. On top of the mountains are the chalets with their kine, and at a certain elevation the milk and the wine meet, while below is the water of

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the lake, so good to mix with both. I do not know that the Swiss use it for that purpose, but there are countries where something of the sort would be done.

When the train put us down at Villeneuve, among railway people as indifferent as our own at country stations, and much crosser and more snubbing, the demand for grapes began with the party who remained with the baggage, while a party of the second part went off to find the *pension* where we were to pass the next three months. The grape-seekers strolled up the stony, steaming streets of the little town, asking for grapes right and left, at all the shops, in their imperfect French, and returned to the station with a paper of gingerbread which they had bought at a jeweller's. I do not know why this artist should have had it for sale, but he must have had it a long time, for it was densely inhabited. Afterwards we found two shops in Villeneuve where they had the most delicious *petits gâteaux*, fresh every day, and nothing but the mania for unattainable grapes prevented the first explorers from seeing them.

In the mean time the party of the second part had found the pension—a pretty stone

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villa overlooking the lake, under the boughs of tall walnut-trees, on the level of a high terrace. Laurel and holly hemmed it in on one side, and southward spread a pleasant garden full of roses and imperfectly ripening fig-trees. In the rear the vineyards climbed the mountains in irregular breadths to the belt of walnuts, beyond which were only forests and pastures. I heard the roar of the torrent that foamed down the steep; the fountain plashed under the group of laurels at the kitchen door; the roses dripped all round the house; and the lake lapped its shores below. Decidedly there was a sense of wet.

The house, which had an Italian outside covered with jasmine and wistarias, confessed the North within. There was a huge hall stove, not yet heated, but on the hearth of the pleasant salon an acceptable fire of little logs was purring. Beside it sat a lady reading, and at a table her daughter was painting flowers. A little Italian, a very little English, a good deal of French, helped me to understand that mademoiselle the landlady was momentarily absent, that the season was exceptionally bad, and that these ladies were

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glad of the sunshine which we were apparently bringing with us. They spoke with those Suissesse voices, which are the sweetest and most softly modulated voices in the world, whether they come from the throat of peasant or of lady, and can make a transaction in eggs and butter in the market-place as musical as chanted verse. To the last these voices remained a delight, and the memory of them made most Italian women's voices a pang when we heard them afterwards.

V

At first we were the only people in the house besides these Swiss ladies and their son and brother, but later there came two ladies from Strasburg, and with them our circle was complete at the table and around the evening lamp in the drawing-room. I am bound to say for the circle, outside of ourselves, that it was a cultivated and even intellectual company, with traits that provoked unusual sympathy and interest. But those friendly people are quite their own property, and I have no intention of com-

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Post-office, Villeneuve

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pelling them to an involuntary celebrity in these pages, much as I should like to impart their quality to my narrative. In the Strasbourgeoises we encountered again that pathos of an insulted and down-trodden nationality which had cast its melancholy over our Venice of Austrian days. German by name and by origin, these ladies were intensely French in everything else. They felt themselves doomed to exile in their own country, they abhorred their Prussian masters, and they had no name for Bismarck that was bad enough. Our Swiss, indeed, hated him almost as bitterly. Their sympathies had been wholly with the French, and they could not repress a half-conscious dread of his principle of race nationality, which would be fatal to Switzerland, one neither in race nor religion, but hitherto indivisible in her ancient freedom. While he lives this fear can never die in Swiss hearts, for they know that if he will, he can, in a Europe where he is the only real power.

Mademoiselle sat at the chief place of the table, and led the talk, imparting to it a flavor of humorous good sense very characteristic. The villa had been her father's

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country-house, and it abounded in a scholar's accumulations of old books in divers languages. She herself knew literature widely in the better way that it was once read. The memories of many years spent in Florence made common Italian ground for us, and she spoke English perfectly.

As I wish to give a complete notion of our household, so far as it may be honestly set down, I will add that the domestics were three. Two of them, the cook and the housemaid, were German Swiss, of middle class, who had taken service to earn what money they could, but mainly to learn French, after the custom of their country, where the young people of a French or Italian canton would in like manner resort to a German province. The third was Louis, a native, who spoke his own *patois*, and found it sufficient for the expression of his ideas. He was chiefly employed about the grounds; in-doors his use was mostly to mount the peculiar clogs used for the purpose, and rub the waxed floors till they shone. These floors were very handsome, of hard woods prettily inlaid; and Louis produced an effect upon them that it seemed a pity to mar with muddy shoes.

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I do not speak of Alexis, the farmer, who appeared in domestic exigencies; but my picture would be incomplete without the portrait of Poppi. Poppi was the large house-dog, who in early life had intended to call himself Puppy, but he naturally pronounced it with a French accent. He was now far from young, but he was still Poppi. I believe he was the more strictly domestic in his habits because an infirmity of temper had betrayed him into an attack upon a neighbor, or a neighbor's dog, and it was no longer safe for him to live much out-of-doors. The confinement had softened his temper, but it had rendered him effeminate and self-indulgent. He had, in fact, been spoiled by the boarders, and he now expected to be present at meals, and to be fed with choice morsels from their plates. As the cold weather came on he developed rheumatism, and demanded our sympathy as well as our hospitality. If Elise in waiting on table brushed him with her skirts, he set up a lamentable cry, and rushed up to the nearest guest, and put his chin on the table for his greater convenience in being comforted. At a dance which we had one even-

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ing Poppi insisted upon being present, and in his efforts to keep out of the way and in the apprehensions he suffered he abandoned himself to moans and howls that sometimes drowned the piano.

Yet Poppi was an amiable invalid, and he was on terms of perfect friendship with the cats, of which there were three generations —Boulette, Boulette's mother, and Boulette's grandmother. They were not readily distinguishable from one another, and I really forget which it was that used to mount to the dining-room window without, and paw the glass till we let her in; but we all felt that it was a great accomplishment, and reflected credit upon us.

VI

The vineyard began immediately behind the laurels that enclosed the house, and at a little distance, where the mountain began to lift from the narrow plateau, stood the farmer's stone cottage, with the stables and the wine-vaults under the same roof. Mademoiselle gave us grapes from her vines at

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dinner, and the walnut-trees seemed public property, though I think one was not allowed to knock the nuts off, but was only free of the windfalls. A little later they were all gathered, and on a certain night the girls and the young men of the village have the custom to meet and make a frolic of cracking them, as they used in husking corn with us. Then the oil is pressed out, and the commune apportions each family its share, according to the amount of nuts contributed. This nut oil imparts a sentiment to salad which the olive cannot give, and mushrooms pickled in it become the most delicious and indigestible of all imaginable morsels. I have had dreams from those pickled mushrooms which, if I could write them out, would make my fortune as a romantic novelist.

The Swiss breakfast was our old friend the Italian breakfast, with butter and Gruyère cheese added to the milk and coffee. We dined at one o'clock, and at six or seven we supped upon a meal that had left off soup and added tea, in order to differ from the dinner. For all this, with our rooms, we paid what we should have paid at a New

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Hampshire farm-house; that is, a dollar a day each.

But the air was such as we could not have got in New Hampshire for twice the money. It restored one completely every twenty-four hours, and it not only stimulated but supported one throughout the day. Our own air is quite as exciting, but after stirring one up, it leaves him to take the consequences, whereas that faithful Swiss air stood by and helped out the enterprise. I rose fresh from my forenoon's writing and eager to walk; I walked all afternoon, and came in perfectly fresh to supper. One can't speak too well of the Swiss air, whatever one says of the Swiss sun.

VII

Whenever it came out, or rather whenever the rain stopped, we pursued our explorations of the neighborhood. It had many interesting features, among which was the large Hôtel Byron, very attractive and almost empty, which we passed every day on our way to the post-office in Villeneuve, and noted two pretty American shes in eye-glasses playing

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The Castle of Chillon

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croquet amid the wet shrubbery, as resolutely cheerful and as young-manless as if they had been in some mountain resort of our own. In the other direction there were simple villas dropped along the little levels and ledges, and vineyards that crept to the road's edge everywhere. There was also a cement factory, busy and prosperous; and to make us quite at home, a saw-mill. Above all, there was the Castle of Chillon; and one of the first Sundays after our arrival we descended the stone staircased steps of our gardened terrace, dripping with ivy and myrtle, and picked our steps over the muddy road to the old prison-fortress, where, in the ancient chapel of the Dukes of Savoy, we heard an excellent sermon from the *pasteur* of our parish. The castle was perhaps a bow-shot from our pension: I did not test the distance, having left my trusty cross-bow and cloth-yard shafts in Boston; but that is my confirmed guess. In point of time it is much more remote, for, as the reader need not be reminded, it was there, or some castle like it, almost from the beginning, or at least from the day when men first began to fight for the possession of the land. The lake-

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dwellers are imagined to have had some sort of stronghold there; and it is reasonably supposed that Romans, Franks, and Burgundians had each fortified the rock. Count Wala, cousin of Charlemagne, and grandson of Charles Martel, was a prisoner in its dungeon in 830 for uttering some words too true for an age unaccustomed to the perpetual veracity of our newspapers. Count Wala, who was also an abbot, had the misfortune to speak of Judith of Bavaria as "the adulterous woman," and when her husband, Louis le Debonair, came back to the throne after the conspiracy of his sons, the lady naturally wanted Wala killed; but Louis compromised by throwing him into the rock of Chillon. This is what Wala's friends say: others say that he was one of the conspirators against Louis. At any rate, he was the first great captive of Chillon, which was a political prison as long as political prisoners were needed in Switzerland. That is now a good while ago.

Chillon fell to the princes of the house of Savoy in 1033, and Count Peter, whom they nicknamed Little Charlemagne for his prowess and his conquests, built the present castle, after which the barons of the Pays de

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Vaud and the Duke of Cophingen (whoever he may have been) besieged Peter in it. Perhaps they might have taken him. But the wine was so good, and the pretty girls of the country were so fond of dancing! They forgot themselves in these delights. All at once Little Charlemagne was upon them. He leaves his force at Chillon, and goes by night to spy out the enemy at Villeneuve, returning at dawn to his people. He came back very gayly; when they saw him so joyous, "What news?" they asked. "Fine and good," he answers; "for, by God's help, if you will behave yourselves well, the enemy is ours." To which they cried with one voice, "Seigneur, you have but to command." They fell upon the barons and the duke, and killed a gratifying number of their followers, carrying the rest back to Chillon, where Peter "used them not as prisoners, but feasted them honorably. Much was the spoil and great the booty."

Afterwards Peter lost the castle, and in retaking it he launched fifty thousand shafts and arrows against it. "The castle was not then an isolated point of rock as we now see it, but formed part of a group of defences."

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VIII

Two or three centuries later—how quickly all those stupid, cruel, weary years pass under the pen!—the spirit of liberty and protestantism began to stir in the heads and hearts of the burghers of Berne and of Geneva. A Savoyard, Francis de Bonivard, prior of St. Victor, sympathized with them. He was noble, accomplished, high-placed, but he loved freedom of thought and act. Yet when a deputation of reformers came to him for advice, he said: "It is to be wished, without doubt, that the evil should be cast out of our midst, provided that the good enters. You burn to reform our Church; certainly it needs it; but how can you reform it, deformed as you are? You complain that the monks and priests are buffoons; and you are buffoons; that they are gamblers and drunkards, and you are the same. Does the hate you bear them come from difference or likeness? You intend to overthrow our clergy and replace them by evangelical ministers. That would be a very good thing in itself, but a very bad

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A Railroad Servant

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thing for you, because you have no happiness but in the pleasures the priests allow you. The ministers wish to abolish vice, but there is where you will suffer most, and after having hated the priests because they are so much like you, you will hate their successors because they are so little like you. You will not have had them two years before you will put them down. Meanwhile, if you trust me, do one of two things: if you wish to remain deformed, as you are, do not wonder that others are like you; or, if you wish to reform them, begin by showing them how."

This was very odd language to use to a deputation of reformers, but I confess that it endears the memory of Bonivard to me. He was a thoroughly charming person, and not at all wise in his actions. Through mere folly he fell twice into the hands of his enemies, suffered two years' imprisonment, and lost his priory. To get it back he laid siege to it with six men and a captain. The siege was a failure. He trusted his enemy, the duke, and was thrown into Chillon, where he remained a sort of guest of the governor for two years. The duke visited the castle

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at the end of that time. "Then the captain threw me into a vault lower than the lake, where I remained four years. I do not know whether it was by order of the duke or from his own motion, but I do know that I then had so much leisure for walking that I wore in the rock which formed the floor of the dungeon a *pathlet* [*vionnet*], or little path, as if one had beaten it out with a hammer." He was fastened by a chain four feet in length to one of the beautiful Gothic pillars of the vault, and you still see where this gentle scholar, this sweet humorist, this wise and lenient philosopher, paced to and fro those weary years like a restless beast—a captive wolf, or a bear in his pit. But his soul was never in prison. As he trod that *vionnet* out of the stone he meditated upon his reading, his travels, the state of the Church and its reform, politics, the origin of evil. "His reflections often lifted him above men and their imperfect works; often, too, they were marked by that scepticism which knowledge of the human heart inspires. 'When one considers things well,' he said, 'one finds that it is easier to destroy the evil than to construct the good. This world being fash-

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ioned like an ass's back, the fardel that you would balance in the middle will not stay there, but hangs over on the other side.'"

Bonivard was set free by the united forces of Berne and Geneva, preaching political and religious liberty by the cannon's mouth, as has had so often to happen. That too must have seemed droll to Bonivard when he came to think it over in his humorous way. "The epoch of the Renaissance and the Reformation was that of strong individualities and undaunted characters. But let no one imagine a resemblance between the prior of St. Victor and the great rebels his contemporaries, Luther, Zwinglius, and Calvin. Like them he was one of the learned men of his time; like them he learned to read the Evangels, and saw their light disengage itself from the trembling gleams of tradition; but beyond that he has nothing in common with them. Bonivard is not a hero; he is not made to obey or to command; he is an artist, a kind of poet, who treats high matters of theology in a humorous spirit; prompt of repartee, gifted with happy dash; his irony has lively point, and he likes to season the counsels of wisdom with *sauce piquante* and

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rustic bonhomie. . . . He prepares the way for Calvin, while having nothing of the Calvinist; he is gay, he is jovial; he has, even when he censures, I know not what air of gentleness that wins your heart."

IX

This and all the rest that I know of Bonivard I learn from a charming historical and topographical study of Montreux and its neighborhood, by MM. Rambert, Lebert, etc.; and I confess it at once, for fear some one else shall find me out by simply buying the book there. It leaves you little ground for classifying Bonivard with the great reformers, but it leaves you still less for identifying him historically with Byron's great melodramatic Prisoner of Chillon. If the Majority have somewhere that personal consciousness without which they are the Nonentity, one can fancy the liberal scholar, the humorous philosopher, meeting the romantic poet, and protesting against the second earthly captivity that he has delivered him over to. Nothing could be more alien to Bonivard than

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A Bit of Villeneuve

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the character of Byron's prisoner; and all that equipment of six supposititious brothers, who perish one by one to intensify his sufferings, is, it must be confessed, odious and ridiculous when you think of the lonely yet cheerful sceptic pacing his *vionnet*, and composing essays and verses as he walked. Prisoner for prisoner, even if both were real, the un-Byronic Bonivard is much more to my mind. But the poet had to make a Byronic Bonivard, being of the romantic time he was, and we cannot blame him. The love of his sentimentality pervades the region; they have named the nearest hotel after him, and there is a *Sentier Byron* leading up to it. But, on the other hand, they have called one of the lake steamboats after Bonivard, which, upon the whole, I should think would be more satisfactory to him than the poem. At any rate, I should prefer it in his place.

X

The fine Gothic chapel where we heard our pasteur preach was whitewashed out of all memory of any mural decoration that its

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earlier religion may have given it; but the gloss of the whitewash was subdued by the dim light that stole in through the long slits of windows. We sat upon narrow wooden seats so very hard that I hope the old dukes and their court were protected by good stout armor against their obduracy, and that they had not to wait a quarter of an hour for the holy father to come walking up the railroad track, as we had for our pastor. There were but three men in the congregation that day, and all the rest were Suissesses, with the hard, pure, plain faces their sex wear mostly in that country. The choir sat in two rows of quaintly carved seats on each side of the pulpit, and the school-master of the village led the singing, tapping his foot to keep time. The pastor, delicate and wan of face, and now no longer living, I came afterwards to know better, and to respect greatly for his goodness and good sense. His health had been broken by the hard work of a mountain parish, and he had vainly spent two winters in Nice. Now he was here as the assistant of the superannuated pastor of Villeneuve, who had a salary of $600 a year from the Government; but how little our preacher had I dare

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not imagine, or what the pastor of the Free Church was paid by his parishioners. M. P—— was a man of culture far above that of the average New England country minister of this day; probably he was more like a New England minister of the past, but with more of the air of the world. He wore the Genevan bands and gown, and represented in that tabernacle of the ancient faith the triumph of "the Religion" with an effectiveness that was heightened by the hectic brightness of his gentle, spiritual eyes; and he preached a beautiful sermon from the beautiful text, "Suffer little children," teaching us that they were the types, not the models, of Christian perfection. There was first a prayer, which he read; then a hymn, and one of the Psalms; then the sermon, very simply and decorously delivered; then another hymn, and prayer. Here, and often again in Switzerland, the New England that is past or passing was recalled to me; these Swiss are like the people of our hill country in their faith, as well as their hard, laborious lives; only they sang with sweeter voices than our women.

The wood-carving of the chapel, which

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must have been of the fourteenth century or earlier, was delightfully grotesque, and all the queerer for its contrast with the Protestant, the Calvinistic, whitewash which one of our fellow-boarders found here in the chapel and elsewhere in the castle *un peu vulgaire*—as if he were a Boston man. But the whole place was very clean, and up the corner of one of the courts ran a strip of Virginia-creeper, which the Swiss call the Canada vine, blood-red with autumn. There was also a rose-tree sixty years old stretching its arms abroad, over the ancient masonry, and feeling itself still young in that sheltered place.

We saw it when we came later to do the whole castle, and to revere the dungeon where Bonivard wore his *vionnet* in the rock. I will not trouble the reader with much about the Hall of Justice and the Chamber of Tortures opening out of it, with the pulley for the rack formerly used in cross-questioning prisoners. These places were very interesting, and so were the bedchambers of the duke and duchess, and the great Hall of the Knights. The wells or pits, armed round with knife points, against which the prisoner struck when hurled down through

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The Prisoner of Chillon

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them into the lake, have long had their wicked throats choked with sand; and the bed hewn out of the rock, where the condemned slept the night before execution, is no longer used for that purpose—possibly because the only prisoners now in Chillon are soldiers punished for such social offences as tipsiness. But the place was all charmingly mediæval, and the more so for a certain rudeness of decoration. The artistic merit was purely architectural, and this made itself felt perhaps most distinctly in the prison vaults, which Longfellow pronounced "the most delightful dungeon" he had ever seen. A great rose-tree overhung the entrance, and within we found them dry, wholesome, and picturesque. The beautiful Gothic pillars rose like a living growth from the rock, out of which the vault was half hewn; but the iron rings to which the prisoners were chained still hung from them. The columns were scribbled full of names, and Byron's was among the rest. The *vionnet* of Bonivard was there, beside one of the pillars, plain enough, worn two inches deep and three feet long in the hard stone. Words cannot add to the pathos of it.

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XI

Nothing could be more nobly picturesque than the outside of Chillon. Its base is beaten by the waves of the lake, to which it presents wide masses of irregularly curving wall, pierced by narrow windows, and surmounted by Mansard-roofs. Wild growths of vines and shrubs break the broad surfaces of the wall, and out of the shoulders of one of the towers springs a tall young fir-tree. The water at its base is intensely blue and unfathomably deep. This is what nature has done; as for men, they have hugely painted the lakeward wall of the castle with the arms of the Canton Vaud, which are nearly as ugly as the arms of Ohio; and they have wrought into the roof of the tallest tower with tiles of a paler tint the word "Chillon," so that you cannot possibly mistake it for any other castle.

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One of the Fountains

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XII

First and last, we hung about Chillon a good deal, both by land and by water. For the latter purpose we had to hire a boat; and deceived by the fact that the owner spoke a Latin dialect, I attempted to beat him down from his demand of a franc an hour. "It's too much," I cried. "It's the price," he answered, laconically. Clearly I was to take it or leave it, and I took it. We did not find our fellow-republicans flatteringly polite, but we found them firm, and, for all I know, honest. At least they seemed as honest as we were, and that is saying a great deal. What struck us from the beginning was the surliness of the men and the industry of the women; and I am persuaded that the Swiss Government is really carried on by the house-keeping sex. At any rate, the postmaster of Villeneuve was a woman; her little girl brought the mail up from the railway station in a hand-cart, and her old mother helped her to understand my French. They were rather cross about it, and one day, with the assistance of a child in arms,

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they defeated me in an attempt I made to get a postal order. I dare say they thought it quite a triumph; but it was not so very much to be proud of. At that period my French, always spoken with the Venetian accent of the friend with whom I had studied it many years before, was taking on strange and wilful characteristics, which would have disabled me in the presence of a much less formidable force. I think the only person really able to interpret me was the amiable mistress of the Croix Blanche, to whose hostelry I went every day for my after-dinner coffee. She knew what I wanted whenever I asked for it, and I simplified my wants so as to meet her in the same spirit. The inn stood midway of the village street that for hundreds of yards followed the curve of the lake shore with its two lines of high stone houses. At one end of it stood a tower springing out of an almost fabulous past; then you came to the first of three plashing fountains, where cattle were always drinking, and bareheaded girls washing vegetables for the pot. Aloft swung the lamps that lighted the village, on ropes stretching across the street. I believe some distinction was

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" They helped to make the hay in the marshes"

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ascribed to Villeneuve for the antiquity of this method of street-lighting. There were numbers of useful shops along the street, which wandered out into the country on the levels of the Rhone, where the mountains presently shut in so close that there was scarcely room for the railway to get through. What finally became of the highway I don't know. One day I tried to run it down, but after a long chase I was glad to get myself brought back in a diligence from the next village.

The road became a street and ceased to be so with an abruptness that admitted nothing of suburban hesitation or compromise, and Villeneuve, as far as it went, was a solid wall of houses on either side. It was called Villeneuve because it was so very, very old; and in the level beyond it is placed the scene of the great Helvetian victory over the Romans, when the Swiss made their invaders pass under the yoke. I do not know that Villeneuve witnessed that incident, but it looks and smells old enough to have done so. It is reasonably picturesque in a semi-Italian, semi-French fashion, but it is to the nose that it makes its chief appeal. Every

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house has a cherished manure heap in its back yard, symmetrically shaped, with the projecting edges of the straw neatly braided: it is a source of family pride as well as profit. But it is chiefly the odor of world-old human occupation, otherwise indescribable, that pervades the air of Villeneuve, and makes the mildest of foreign sojourners long for the application of a little dynamite to its ancient houses. Our towns are perhaps the ugliest in the world, but how open to the sun and wind they are! how free, how pure, how wholesome!

On week-days a cart sometimes passed through Villeneuve with a most disproportionate banging over the cobble-stones, but usually the walls reverberated the soft tinkle of cow-bells as the kine wound through from pasture to pasture and lingered at the fountains. On Sundays the street was reasonably full of young men in the peg-top trousers which the Swiss still cling to, making eyes at the girls in the upper windows. These were the only times when I saw women of any age idle. Sometimes through the open door I caught a glimpse of a group of them busy with their work, while a little girl read

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Cattle at the Fountains

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to them. Once in a crowded café, where half a hundred men were smoking and drinking and chattering, the girl who served my coffee put down a volume of Victor Hugo's poems to bring it. But mostly their literary employments did not go beyond driving the cows to pasture and washing clothes in the lake, where they beat the linen with far-echoing blows of their paddles. They helped to make the hay on the marshes beyond the village, and they greatly outnumbered the men in the labors of the vintage. They were seldom pretty either in face or figure; they seemed all to have some stage of goitre; but their manners were charming, and their voices, as I have said, angelically sweet. Our pasteur's wife said that there was a great deal of pauperism in Villeneuve, "because of the drunkenness of the men and the disorder of the women;" but I saw only one man drunk in the streets there, and what the disorders of the women were I don't know. Possibly their labors in the field made them poor house-keepers, though this is mere conjecture. Divorce is theoretically easy, but the couple seeking it must go before a magistrate every four months for two

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years and insist that they continue to desire it. This makes it rather uncommon.

If the women were not good-looking, if their lives of toil stunted and coarsened them, the men, with greater apparent leisure, were no handsomer. Among the young I noticed the frequency of what may be called the republican face — thin and aquiline, whether dark or fair. The Vaudois as I saw them were at no age a merry folk. In the fields they toiled silently; in the cafés, where they were sufficiently noisy over their new wine, they talked without laughter, and without the shrugs and gestures that enliven conversation among other Latin peoples. They had a hard-favored grimness and taciturnity that with their mountain scenery reminded me of New England now and again, and gave me the bewildered sense of having dropped down in some little anterior America. But there was one thing that marked a great difference from our civilization, and that was the prevalence of uniforms, for which the Swiss have the true European fondness. This is natural in a people whose men all are or have been soldiers; and the war footing on which the little republic is obliged to

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Washing Clothes in the Lake

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keep a large force in that ridiculous army-ridden Europe must largely account for the abandonment of the peaceful industries to women. But the men are off at the mountain chalets too, and they are away in all lands, keeping hotels, and amassing from the candle-ends of the travelling public the fortune with which all Swiss hope to return home to die.

XIII

Sometimes the country people I met greeted me, as sometimes they still do in New Hampshire, but commonly they passed in silence. I think the mountains must have had something to do with hushing the people: far and near, on every hand, they rise such bulks of silence. The chief of their stately company was always the Dent-du-Midi, which alone remains perpetually snow-covered, and which, when not hooded in the rain-bearing mists of that most rainy autumn, gave back the changing light of every hour with new splendors, though of course it was most beautiful in the early sunsets. Then its cold snows warmed and softened

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into something supernally rosy, while all the other peaks were brown and purple, and its vast silence was thrilled with a divine message that spoke to the eye. Across the lake and on its farther shores the mountains were dimly blue; but nearer, in the first days of our sojourn, they were green to their tops. Away up there we could see the lofty steeps and slopes of the summer pastures, and set low among them the chalets where the herdsmen dwelt. None of the mountains seemed so bare and sterile as Mount Washington, and though they were on a sensibly vaster scale than the White Mountains generally, I remembered the grandeur of Chocorua and Kearsarge in their presence. But my national—not to say my hemispheric—pride suffered a terrible blow as the season advanced. I had bragged all my life of the glories of our American autumnal foliage, which I had, in common with the rest of my countrymen, complacently denied to all the rest of the world. Yet here, before my very eyes, the same beautiful miracle was wrought. Day after day the trees on the mountainsides changed, and kindled and softly smouldered in a thousand delicate hues, till all

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Flirtation at the Fountains

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their mighty flanks seemed draped in the mingling dyes of Indian shawls. Shall I own that while this effect was not the fiery gorgeousness of our autumn leaves, it was something tenderer, richer, more tastefully lovely? Never!

The clouds lowering, and as it were loafing along, among the tops and crags, were a perpetual amusement, and when the first cold came it was odd to see a cloud in a sky otherwise clear stoop upon some crest, and after lingering there awhile drift off about its business, and leave the mountain all white with snow. This grew more and more frequent, and at last, after a long rain, we looked out on the mountains whitened all round us far down their sides, while it was still summer green and summer bloom in the valley. The moon rose and blackened the mountains below the crags of snow, which shone out above like one of her own dead landscapes. Slowly the winter descended, snow after snow, keeping a line beautifully straight along the mountain-sides, till it reached the valley and put out our garden roses at last. The hard-wood trees lost their leaves, and stretched dim and brown along the lower

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ranges; the pines straggled high up into the snows. The Jura, far across the lake, was vaguely roseate, with an effect of perpetual sunset; the Dent-du-Midi lost the distinction of its eternal drifts; and the cold not only descended upon us, but from the frozen hills all round us hemmed us in with a lateral pressure that pierced and chilled to the marrow. The mud froze, and we walked to church dry-shod. It was quite time to fire the vestibule stove, which, after fighting hard and smoking rebelliously at first, sobered down to its winter work, and afforded Poppi's rheumatism the comfort for which he had longed pined.

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Second Paper

I

THE winter and the vintage come on together at Villeneuve, and when the snows had well covered the mountains around, the grapes in the valley were declared ripe by an act of the Commune. There had been so much rain and so little sun that their ripeness was hardly attested otherwise. Fully two-thirds of the crop had blackened with blight; the imperfect clusters, where they did not hang sodden and mildewed on the vines, were small and sour. It was sorrowful to see them, and when, about the middle of October, the people assembled in the vineyards to gather them, the spectacle had none of that gayety which the poets had taught me to expect of it. Those poor clusters did not

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"reel to earth
Purple and gushing,"

but limply waited the short hooked knife with which the peasants cut them from their stems; and the peasants, instead of advancing with jocund steps and rustic song to the sound of the lute and tabor and other convenient instruments, met in obedience to public notice duly posted about the Commune, and set to work, men, women, and children alike silent and serious. So many of the grapes are harvested and manufactured in common that it is necessary the vintage should begin on a fixed day, and no one was allowed to anticipate or postpone. Some cut the grapes, and dropped them into the flattish wooden barrels, which others, after mashing the berries with a long wooden pestle, bore off and emptied frothing and gurgling into big casks mounted on carts. These were then driven into the village, where the mess was poured into the presses, and the wine crushed out to the last bitter dregs. The vineyards were a scene of activity, but not hilarity, though a little way off they looked rather lively with the vintagers at work in them. We climbed

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to one of them far up the mountain-side one day, where a family were gathering the grapes on a slope almost as steep as a house roof, father, mother, daughter, son-in-law, big boy, and big girl all silently busy together. There were bees and wasps humming around the tubs of crushed grapes in the pale afternoon sun; the view of the lake and the mountains was inspiring; but there was nothing bacchanalian in the affair, unless the thick calves of the girl, as she bent over to cut the clusters, suggested a Mænad fury. These poor people were quite songless, though I am bound to say that in another vineyard I did hear some of the children singing. It had momentarily stopped raining; but it soon began again, and the vintage went sorrowfully on in the mud. All Villeneuve smelt of the harsh juice and pulp arriving from the fields in the wagons, carts, tubs, and barrels which crowded the streets and sidewalks, and in divers cavernous basements the presses were at work, and there was a slop and drip of new wine everywhere. After dark the people came in from the fields and gossiped about their doors, and the red light of flitting lanterns blotched the steady rainpour.

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Outside of the village rose the black mountains, white at the top with their snows.

In the cafés and other public places there were placards advertising American wine-presses, but I saw none of them in use. At a farm-house near us we looked on at the use of one of the old-fashioned Swiss presses. Under it lay a mighty cake of grapes, stems, and skins, crushed into a common mass, and bulging farther beyond the press with each turn of the screw, while the juice ran in a little rivulet into a tub below. When the press was lifted, the grapes were seen only half crushed. Two peasants then mounted the cake, and trimmed it into shape with long-handled spades, piling the trimmings on top, and then bringing the press down again. They invited us with charming politeness to taste the juice, but their heavy boots bore evidence of too recent a visit to the cherished manure heap, and we thanked them with equal courtesy.

This grape cake, when it had yielded up its last drop, would be broken to pieces and scattered over the fields as a fertilizer. The juice would meanwhile have been placed to ferment in the tuns, twelve and

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thirteen feet deep, which lay in the adjoining cellar.

For weeks after the vintage people were drinking the new wine, which looked thick and whitish in the glasses, at all the cafés. It seemed to be thought a dainty beverage, but our scruples against it remained, and I cannot say what its effect upon the drinkers might be. Perhaps it had properties as a "sweet, oblivious antidote" which rendered necessary the placard we saw in the café of the little Hôtel Chillon:

"Die Rose blüht,
Der Dorn der sticht;
Wer gleich bezahlt
Vergisst es nicht."

Or, in inadequate English:

The roses bloom,
The thorns they stick;
No one forgets
Who settles quick.

The relation of the ideas is not very apparent, but the lyric cry is distinctly audible.

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II

One morning, a week before the vintage began, we were wakened by the musical clash of cow-bells, and for days afterwards the herds came streaming from the chalets on all the mountains round to feed upon the lowland pastures for a brief season before the winter should house them. There was something charming to ear and eye in this autumnal descent of the kine, and we were sorry when it ended. They thronged the village in their passage to the levels beside the Rhone, where afterwards they lent their music and their picturesqueness to the meadows. With each herd there were two or three goats, and these goats thought they were cows; but, after all, the public interest of this descent of the cows was not really comparable to that of the fall elections, now coming on with handbills and newspaper appeals very like those of our own country at like times. In the cafés, the steamboats, the railway stations, the street corners, vivid posters warned the voters against the wiles of the enemy, and the journals urged the

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Castle of Aigle

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people of the Canton Vaud to be up and doing; they declared the issue before them a vital one, and the crisis a crisis of the greatest moment.

In the mean time the people in our pension, who were so intelligent and well informed about other things, bore witness to the real security of the State, and the tranquillity of the Swiss mind generally concerning politics, by their ignorance of the name of their existing President. They believed he was a man of the name of Schultz; but it appeared that his name was not at all Schultz, when we referred the matter to our pasteur. It was from him, indeed, that I learned nearly all I knew of Swiss politics, and it was from his teaching that I became a conservative partisan in the question, then before the voters, of a national free-school law. The radicals, who, the pasteur said, wished Switzerland to attempt the role "*grande nation*," had brought forward this measure in the Federal legislature, and it was now, according to the sensible Swiss custom, to be submitted to a popular vote. It provided for the establishment of a national bureau of education, and the conserv-

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atives protested against it as the entering wedge of centralization in government affairs. They contended that in a country shared by three races and two religions education should be left as much as possible to the several cantons, which in the Swiss constitution are equivalent to our States. I am happy to say that the proposed law was overwhelmingly defeated; I am happy because I liked the pasteur so much, though when I remember the sympathetic bric-à-brac dealer at Vevay, who was a radical, but who sold me some old pewters at a very low price, I can't help feeling a little sorry too. However, the Swiss still keep their old school law, under which each canton taxes itself for education, as our States do, though all share in the advantages of the universities, which are part of the public-school system.

The parties in Switzerland are fortunately not divided by questions of race or religion, but the pasteur owned that the Catholics were a difficult element, and had to be carefully managed. They include the whole population of the Italian cantons, and part of the French and German. In Geneva and other large towns the labor question

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troublesomely enters, and the radicals, like our Democrats, are sometimes the retrograde party.

The pasteur spoke with smiling slight of the Père Hyacinthe and the Döllinger movements, and he confessed that the Protestants were cut up into too many sects to make progress among the Catholic populations. The Catholics often keep their children out of the public schools, as they do with us, but these have to undergo the State examinations, to which all the children, whether taught at home or in private schools, must submit. He deplored the want of moral instruction in the public schools, but he laughed at the attempts in France to instil non-religious moral principles: when I afterwards saw this done in the Florentine ragged schools I could not feel that he was altogether right. He was a member of the communal school committee, and he told me that this body was appointed by the syndic and council of each commune, who are elected by the people. To some degree religion influences local feeling, the Protestant Church being divided into orthodox and liberal factions; there is a large Unitarian party be-

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sides, and agnosticism is a qualifying element of religious thought.

Outside of our pension I had not many sources of information concerning the political or social life at Villeneuve. I knew the village shoemaker, a German, who had fixed his dwelling there because it was so *bequem*, and who had some vague aspirations towards Chicago, whither a citizen of Villeneuve had lately gone. But he was discouraged by my representation, with his wax, his awl, and his hammer, successively arranged as New York, Cleveland, and Chicago, on his shoebench, of the extreme distance of the last from the seaboard. He liked his neighbors and their political system; and so did the *portier* at the Hôtel Byron, another German, with whom I sometimes talked of general topics in transacting small affairs of carriage hire and the like, and who invited me to notice how perfectly well these singular Swiss, in the midst of a Europe elsewhere overrun with royalties, got on without a king, queen, or anything of the kind. In his country, he said, those hills would be covered with fortifications, but here they seemed not to be thought necessary.

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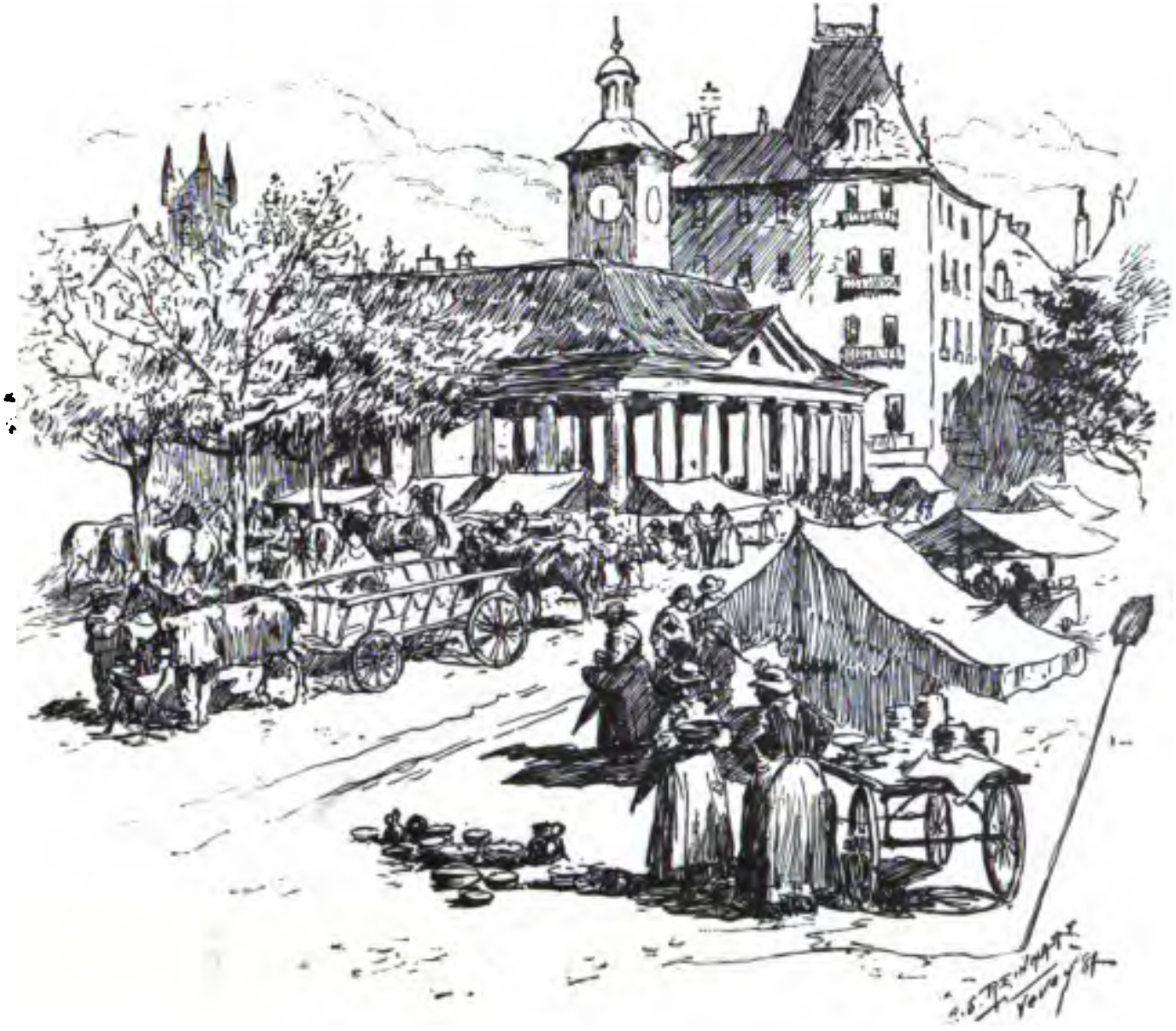

The Market at Vevay

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I made friends with the *instituteur* of the Villeneuve public school, who led the singing at church, and kept the village bookstore; and he too talked politics with me, and told me that all elections were held on Sunday, when the people were at leisure, for otherwise they would not take the time to vote. He was not so clear as to why they were always held in church, but that is the fact; and sometimes the sacred character of the place is not enough to suppress boisterous party feeling, though it certainly helps to control it.

After divine service on election Sunday I went to the Croix Blanche for my coffee, to pass the time till the voting should begin. On the church door was posted a printed summons to the electors, and on the café billiard tables I found ballots of the different parties scattered. Gendarmes had also distributed them about in the church pews; they were enclosed in envelops, which were voted sealed. On a table before the pulpit the ballot-box — a glass urn — was placed; and beside it sat the judges of election, with lists of the registered voters. But in any precinct of the canton an elector who could

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prove that he had not voted at home might deposit his ballot in any other. The church bell rang for the people to assemble, and the voting began and ended in perfect quiet. But I could not witness an election of this ancient republic, where Freedom was so many centuries old, without strong emotion; it had from its nature and the place the consecration of a religious rite.

III

The church itself was old—almost as old as Swiss freedom, and older than the freedom of the Vaud. The Gothic interior, which had once, no doubt, been idolatrously frescoed and furnished with statues, was now naked and coldly Protestant; one window, partly stained, let in a little colored light to mix with the wintry day that struck through the others. The pulpit was in the centre of the church, and the clerk's desk diagonally across from it. The floor was boarded over, but a chill struck through from the stones below, and the people seemed to shiver through the service that preceded the elec-

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tion. When the pasteur mounted the pulpit they listened faithfully, but when the clerk led the psalm they vented their suffering in the most dreadful groaning that ever passed for singing outside of one of our country churches.

It was all very like home, and yet unlike it, for there is much more government in Switzerland than with us, and much less play of individuality. In small communes, for example, like Villeneuve, there are features of practical socialism, which have existed apparently from the earliest times. Certain things are held in common, as mountain pasturage and the forests, from which each family has a provision of fuel. These and other possessions of the commune are "confided to the public faith," and trespass is punished with signal severity. The trees are felled under government inspection, and the woods are never cut off wholesale. When a tree is chopped down a tree is planted, and the floods that ravage Italy from the mountains denuded of their forests are unknown to the wiser Swiss. Throughout Switzerland the State insures against fire, and inflicts penalties for neglect

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yard to the back of the house, where a huge dog leaped the length of his chain at us, and a maid let us in. The pasteur, in a coat of unclerical cut, and his wife, in black silk, received us in the parlor, which was heated by a handsome porcelain stove, and simply furnished, much like such a room at home. Madame P——, who was musical, played a tempestuously representative composition called "L'Orage" on the upright piano, and joined from time to time in her husband's talk about Swiss affairs, which I have already allowed the reader to profit by. They offered us tea, wine, grapes, and cake, and we came away at eleven, lighted home through the vineyards by Louis, the farm boy, with his lantern.

Another day mademoiselle did us the pleasure to take us to her sister, married, and living at Aigle—a clean, many-hotelled, prosperous town, a few miles off, which had also the merit of a very fine old castle. We found our friends in an apartment of a former convent, behind which stretched a pretty lawn, with flowers and a fountain, and then vineyards to the foot of the mountains and far up their sides. We entered the court by

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a great stone-paved carriage-way, as in Italy, and we found the drawing-room furnished with Italian simplicity, and abounding in souvenirs of the hostess's long Florentine sojourn; but it was fortified against the Swiss winter by the tall Swiss stove. The whole family received us, including the young lady daughter, the niece, the well-mannered boys and their father openly proud of them, and the pleasant young English girl who was living in the family, according to a common custom, to perfect her French. This part of Switzerland is full of English people, who come not always for the French, but often for the cheapness which they find equally there.

Mr. K—— was a business man, well-to-do, well educated, agreeable, and interesting; his house and his table, where we sat down to the mid-day dinner of the country, were witness to his prosperity. I hope it is no harm, in the interest of statistics, to say that this good Swiss dinner consisted of soup, cold ham put up like sausage, stuffed roast beef which had first been boiled, cauliflower, salad, corn-starch pudding, and apples stewed whole and stuck full of pine pips. There

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was abundance of the several kinds of excellent wine made upon the estate, both white and red, and it was freely given to the children. Mr. K—— seemed surprised when we refused it for ours; and probably he could have given us good reason for his custom. His boys were strong, robust, handsome fellows; he had a charming pride in showing us the prizes they had taken at school; and on the lawn they were equally proud to show the gymnastic feats they had learned there. I believe we are coming to think now that the American schools are better than the Swiss; but till we have organized something like the Swiss school excursions, and have learned to mix more open air with our instruction, I doubt if the Swiss would agree with us.

After dinner we went to the *vente*, or charitable fair, which the young ladies of the town were holding in one of the public buildings. It was bewilderingly like the church fair of an American country town, socially and materially. The young ladies had made all sorts of pretty knick-knacks, and were selling them at the little tables set about the room; they also presided, more

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or less alluringly, at fruit, coffee, and ice-cream stands; and—I will not be sure, but I *think*—some of them seemed to be flirting with the youth of the other sex. There was an auction going on, and the place was full of tobacco smoke, which the women appeared not to mind. A booth for the sale of wine and beer was set off, and there was a good deal of amiable drinking. This was not like our fairs quite; and I am bound to say that the people of Aigle had more polished manners, if not better, than our country-town average.

To quit this scene for the castle of Aigle was to plunge from the present into my favorite Middle Ages. We were directly in the times when the Lords of Berne held the Vaud by the strong hand, and forced Protestant convictions upon its people by the same vigorous methods. The castle was far older than their occupation, but it is chiefly memorable as the residence of their bailiffs before the independence of the Vaud was established after the French Revolution. They were hard masters, but they left political and religious freedom behind them, where perhaps neither would have existed

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Germans at Montreux

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without them. The castle, though eminently picturesque and delightfully Gothic, is very rudely finished and decorated, and could never have been a luxurious seat for the bailiffs. It is now used by the local courts of law; a solitary, pale, unshaven old prisoner, who seemed very glad of our tribute-money, inhabited its tower, and there was an old woman carding wool in the baronial kitchen. Her little grandson lighted a candle and showed us the *oubliettes*, which are subterranean dungeons, one above the other, and barred by mighty doors of wood and iron. The outer one bore an inscription, which I copied:

"Doubles grilles a gros cloux,
Triples portes, fortes Verroux,
Aux âmes vraiment méchantes
Vous représentez l'Enfer;
Mais aux âmes innocentes
Vous n'êtes que du bois, de la pierre, & du fer!"

But these doors, thus branded as representing the gates of hell to guilty souls, and to the innocent being merely wood, stone, and iron, sufficed equally to shut the blameless in, and I doubt if the reflection suggested was ever of any real comfort to them. For

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one thing, the captives could not read the inscription; it seems to have been intended rather for the edification of the public.

We visited the castle a second time, to let the children sketch it; and even I, who could not draw a line, became with them the centre of popular interest. Half a dozen little people who had been playing "snap-the-whip" left off and crowded round, and one of the boys profited by the occasion to lock into the barn, near which we sat, a peasant who had gone in to fodder his cattle. When he got out he criticised the pictures, and insisted that one of the artists should put in a certain window which he had left out of the tower. Upon the whole, we liked him better as a prisoner.

"What would you do," I asked the children, "if I gave you a piece of twenty-five centimes?"

They reflected, and then evidently determined to pose as good children. "We would give it to our mamma."

"Now don't you think," I pursued, "that it would be better to spend it for little cakes?"

This instantly corrupted them, and they cried with one voice, "Oh yes!"

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Out of respect to me the oldest girl made a small boy pull up his stocking, which had got down round his ankle, and then they took the money and all ran off. Later they returned to show me that they had got it changed into copper and shared equally among them. They must have spent an evening of great excitement talking us over.

The October sun set early, chill, and disconsolate after a rain. A weary peasant with a heavy load on his back, which he looked as if he had brought from the dawn of time, approached the castle gate, and bowed to us in passing. I was not his feudal lord, but his sad, work-worn aspect gave me as keen a pang as if I had been.

IV

The Pays de Vaud is also the land of castles, and the visitor to Vevay should not fail to see Blonay Castle, the seat of the ancient family which, with intervals of dispossession, has possessed it ever since the Crusades. It is only a little way off, on the first rise of the hills, from which it looks over the vineyards

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on inexpressible glories of lake and distant mountains, and it is most nobly approached through steeps of vine and grove. Apparently it is kept up in as much of the sentiment of the past as possible, and one may hire its baronial splendor fully furnished; for the keeper told it had been occupied by an English family for the last three winters. The finish, like that of the castle of Aigle, is rude, but the whole place is wonderfully picturesque and impressive. The arched gateway is alone worth a good rent; the long corridors from which the chambers open are suitable to ghosts fond of walking exercise; the superb dining-room is round, and the floor is so old that it would shake under the foot of the lightest spectre. The *répertoire* of family traditions is almost inexhaustible, and doubtless one might have the use of them for a little additional money. One of the latest is of the seventeenth century, when the daughter of the house was "the beautiful Nicolaïde de Blonay, before whom many adorers had bent the knee in vain. Among them, a certain Tavel de Villars, vanquished the proud beauty by his constancy. But the marriage was delayed. Officer in the service

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of France, Tavel was detained by his military duties. In the mean time Jean-François de Blonay, of another branch of the family, the Savoyard branch, fell in love with his cousin, and twice demanded her in marriage. Twice he was refused. Then, listening only to his passion, he assembled some of his friends, and hid himself with them near the castle. They watched the comings and goings of the baron, and suddenly profiting by his absence, they entered his dwelling and carried off the fair Nicolaïde, who, transported to Savoy, rewarded the boldness of her captor by becoming his wife. This history, which resembles that of the beautiful Helen, and is not less authentic, kindled the fiercest hostilities between the Tavel and Blonay families; the French and Italian ambassadors intervened; and it all ended in a sentence pronounced at Berne against the Blonays—a sentence as useless as it was severe—for the principal offenders had built a nest for their loves in domains which they possessed in Savoy. The old baron alone felt its effects. He was severely reprimanded for having so ill fulfilled his paternal duties."

The good burghers of Berne—the Lords

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as they called themselves—were in fact very hard with all their Vaudois subjects. "Equally merciless to the vanities and the vices, they confounded luxury and drunkenness in their rules, pleasures and bad manners. They were no less the enemies of innovations. Coffee at its introduction was stigmatized as a devilish invention; tea was no better; as to tobacco, whether snuffed or smoked, it was worse yet. Low-necked dresses and low-quartered shoes were rigorously forbidden. Games and all dances, 'except three modest dances on wedding-days,' were unlawful. . . . The Sabbath was strictly observed; silence reigned in the villages, even those remotest from the church, until the divine service of the afternoon was closed; no cart might pass in the street, and no child play there. . . . In short, all their ordinances and regulations witness a firm design on the part of their Excellencies 'to revive among all those under their domination a life and manners truly Christian.' The Pays de Vaud under this régime acquired its moral and religious education. A more serious spirit gradually prevailed. The Bible became the book *par excellence*, the book of the fireside, and on

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Church Terrace, Montreux

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Sunday the exercises of devotion took the place of the public amusements."

When the regicides fled from England after the Restoration they could not have sought a more congenial refuge than such a land as this. One of them, as is known, died in Vevay by the shot of an assassin sent to murder him by Charles II.; with another he is interred in the old Church of St. Martin there; and I went there to revere the tombs of Ludlow and Broughton. While I was looking about for them a familar name on a tablet caught my eye, and I read that "William Walter Phelps, of New Jersey, and Charles A. Phelps, of Massachusetts, his descendants beyond the seas," had set it there in memory of the brave John Phelps, who was so anxious to be known as clerk of the court which tried Charles Stuart that he set his name to every page of its record.

That tablet was the most interesting thing in the old church; but I found Vevay quaint and attractive in every way. It is, as all the world knows, the paradise of pensions and hotels and boarding-schools, and one may live well and study deeply there for a very little money. It was part of our mission to

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lunch at the most gorgeous of the hotels, and to look upon such of our fellow-countrymen as we might see there, after our long seclusion at Villeneuve; and we easily found all the splendor and compatriotism we wanted. The hotel we chose stood close upon the lake, with a superb view of the mountains, and its evergreens in tubs stood about the gravelled spaces in a manner that consoled us with a sense of being once more in the current of polite travel. The waiter wanted none of our humble French, but replied to our timorous advances in that tongue in a correct and finally expensive English. Under the stimulus of this experience we went to a bric-à-brac shop and bought a lot of fascinating old pewter platters and flagons, and then we went recklessly shopping about in all directions. We even visited an exhibition of Swiss paintings, which, from an ethical and political point of view, were admirable; and we strolled delightedly about through the market, where the peasant women sat and knitted before their baskets of butter, fruit, cheese, flowers, and grapes, and warbled their gossip and their bargains in their angelic Suissesse voices, while their husbands

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priced the cattle and examined the horses. It was all very pictureqsue, and prophesied of the greater picturesqueness of Italy, which we were soon to see.

V

In fact, there was a great deal to make one think of Italy in that region; but the resemblance ended mostly with the Southern architecture and vegetation. Our lake coast had its own features, one of the most striking of which was its apparent abandonment to the use and pleasure of strangers. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the water was everywhere bordered by hotels and pensions. Such large places as Vevay and Lausanne had their proper life, of course, but of smaller ones, like Montreux, the tourist seemed to be in exclusive possession. In our walks thither we met her—when the tourist was of that sex—young, gay, gathering the red leaves of the Virginia-creeper from the lakeward terraces of the highway; we met him, old, sick, pale. munching the sour grapes, and trying somehow to kill the time.

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Large listless groups of them met every steamboat from which we landed, and parties of them encountered us on every road. "A hash of foreigners," the Swiss call Montreux, and they scarcely contribute a native flavor to the dish. The Englishman no longer characterizes sojourn there, I should say; the Americans, who pay and speak little or no French, and the Russians, who speak beautiful French but do not pay, are there in about equal abundance; there are some French people; but if it came to my laying my hand upon my heart, I should say there seemed more Germans than any other nationality at Montreux. They are not pretty to look at, and apparently not pleasant; and it is said that the Swiss, who digest them along with the rest of us, do not like them. In fact, the Germans seem everywhere to take their new national consequence ungraciously.

Besides the foreigners, there is not much to see at Montreux, though one must not miss the ancient church which looks out from its lofty place over the lake, and offers the visitor many seats on its terrace for the enjoyment of the same view. The day we went he had pretty well covered the gravel

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with grape-skins; but he had left the prospect undisturbed.

What struck me principally in Montreux was its extreme suitability to the purposes of the international novelist. It was full of sites for mild incidents, for tacit tragedies, for subdued flirtations, and arrested improprieties. I can especially recommend the Kursaal at Montreux to my brother and sister fictionists looking about for a pretty *entourage*. Its terrace is beaten by the billows of the restless lake, and in soft weather people sit at little tables there; otherwise they take their ices inside the café, and all the same look out on the Dent-du-Midi, and feel so bored with everybody that they are just in the humor to be interested in anybody. There is a very pretty theatre in the Kursaal, where they seldom give entertainments, but where, if you ever go, you see numbers of pretty girls, and in a box a pale, delicate-looking middle-aged Englishman in a brown velvet coat, with his two daughters. The concert will be very good, and a young man of cultivated sympathies and disdainful tastes could have a very pleasant time there. For the rest, Montreux offers to the novelist's hand perhaps the

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crude American of the station who says it is the cheapest place he has struck, and he is going to stick it out there awhile; perhaps the group of chattering American school-girls; perhaps the little Jewish water-color painter who tells of his narrow escape from the mad dog, which having broken his chain at Bouveret, had bitten six persons on the way to Clarens, and been killed by the gendarmes near Vevay; perhaps two Englishwomen who talk for half an hour about their rooms at the hotel, and are presently joined by their husbands, who pursue the subject. These are the true features of modern travel, and for a bit of pensive philosophy, or to have a high-bred, refined widow with a fading sorrow encountered by a sensitive nature of the other sex, there is no better place than the sad little English church-yard at Montreux. It is full of the graves of people who have died in the search for health far from home, and it has a pathos therefore which cannot be expressed. The stones grow stained and old under the laurels and hollies, and the rain-beaten ivy creeps and drips all over the grassy mounds. Yes, that is a beautiful, lonely, heart-breaking place. Now and again

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I saw black-craped figures silently standing there, and paid their grief the tribute of a stranger's pang as I passed, happy with my children by my side.

VI

I did not find Aigle and Blonay enough to satisfy my appetite for castles, and once, after several times passing a certain *château meublé à louer* in the levels of the Rhone Valley, I made bold to go in and ask to look at it. I loved it for the certain Louis XV. grandiosity there was about it; for the great clock in the stable wall; for the balcony frescos on the front of the garden-house, and for the arched driveway to the court. It seemed to me a wonderfully good thing of its kind, and I liked Napoleon's having lodged in it when his troops occupied Villeneuve. It had, of course, once belonged to a rich family, but it had long passed out of their hands into those of the sort of farmer-folk who now own it, and let it when they can. It had stood several years empty, for the situation is not thought wholesome, and the last

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tenant had been an English clergyman, who kept a school in it for baddish boys whom no one else could manage, and who were supposed to be out of harm's way there.

I followed a young man whom I saw going into the gateway, and asked him if I could see the house. He said "Yes," and summoned his mother, a fierce-looking little dame, in a black Vaudois cap, who came out of a farm-house near with jingling keys, and made him throw open the whole house, while she walked me through the sad, forgotten garden, past its silent fountain, and through its grove of pine to the top of an orchard wall, where the Dent-du-Midi showed all its snow-capped mass. Within, the château was very clean and dry; the dining-room was handsomely panelled, and equipped with a huge porcelain stove; the shelves of the library were stocked with soberly bound books, and it was tastefully frescoed; the pretty chambers were in the rococo taste of the fine old rococo time, with successive scenes of the same history painted over the fireplaces throughout the suite; the drawing-room was elegant with silk hangings and carved mirrors; and the noble staircase, whose landing

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Tour up the Lake

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was honored with the bust of the French king of the château's period, looked as if that prince had just mounted it. All these splendors, with the modern comfort of hot and cold water wherever needed, you may have, if you like, for $500 a year; and none of the castles I saw compared with this château in richness of finish or furnishing. I am rather particular to advertise it because a question, painfully debating itself in my mind throughout my visit, as to the sum I ought to offer the woman was awkwardly settled by her refusing to take anything, and I feel a lingering obligation. But, really, I do not see how the reader, if he likes solitary state, or has "daughters to educate," or baddish boys to keep out of mischief, or is wearing out a heavy disappointment, or is suffering under one of those little stains or uneasy consciences such as people can manage so much better in Europe—I say I do not see how he could suit himself more perfectly or more cheaply than in that pensively superb old château, with its aristocratic seclusion, and possibly malarious, lovely old garden.

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VII

Early in October, before the vintage began, we seized the first fine day, which the Dent-du-Midi lifted its cap of mists the night before to promise, and made an early start for the tour of the lake. Mademoiselle and her cousins came with us, and we all stood together at the steamer's prow to watch the morning sunshine break through the silvery haze that hung over Villeneuve, dimly pierced by the ghostly poplars wandering up the road beside the Rhone. As we started, the clouds drifted in ineffable beauty over the mountain-sides; one slowly dropped upon the lake, and when we had sailed through it we had come in sight of the first town on the French border, which the gendarmes of the two nations seemed to share equally between them. All these lake-side villages are wonderfully picturesque, but this first one had a fancy in chimney-tops which I think none of the rest equalled —some were twisted, some shaped like little chalets; and there were groups of old wood-colored roofs and gables which were luxuries

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of color. A half-built railroad was struggling along the shore; at times it seemed to stop hopelessly; then it began again, and then left off, to reappear beyond some point of hill which had not yet been bored through or blown quite away. I have never seen a railroad laboring under so many difficulties. The landscape was now grand and beautiful, like New England, now pretty and soft, like Old England, till we came to Evains-les-Bains, which looked like nothing but the French watering-place it was. It looked like a watering-place that would be very gay in the season; there were lots of pretty boats; there was a most official-looking gendarme in a cocked hat, and two jolly young priests joking together; and there were green, frivolous French fishes swimming about in the water, and apparently left behind when the rest of the brilliant world had flown.

Here the little English artist who had been so sociable all the way from Villeneuve was reinforced by other Englishmen, whom we found on the much more crowded boat to which we had to change. Our company began to diversify itself: there were French

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and German parties as well as English. We changed boats four times in the tour of the lake, and each boat brought us a fresh accession of passengers. By-and-by there came aboard a brave Italian, with birds in cages and gold-fish in vases, with a gay Southern face, a coral neck button, a brown mustache and imperial, and a black-tasselled red fez that consoled. He was the vividest bit of color in our composition, though we were not wanting in life without him. There began to be some Americans besides ourselves, and a pretty girl of our nation, who occupied a public station at the boat's prow, seemed to know that she was pretty, but probably did not. She will recognize herself in this sketch; but who was that other pretty maiden, with brown eyes wide apart, and upper lip projecting a little, as if pulled out by the piquant nose? I must have taken her portrait so carefully because I thought she would work somewhere into fiction; but the reader is welcome to her as she is. He may also have the *spirituelle* English girl who ordered tea, and added, "I want some kätzchens with my tea." "Kätzchens! Kätzchen is a little cat." "Yes; it's a word of my

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own invention." These are the brilliant little passages of foreign travel that make a voyage to Europe worth while. I add to this in ternational gallery the German girl in blue calico, who had so strong a belief that she was elegantly dressed that she came up on deck with her coffee, and drank it where we might all admire her. I intersperse also the comment that it is the Germans who seem to prevail now in any given international group, and that they have the air of coming forward to take the front seats as by right; while the English, once so confident of their superiority, seem to yield the places to them. But I dare say this is all my fancy.

I am sure, however, of the ever-varying grandeur and beauty of the Alps all round us. Those of the Savoyard shore had a softer loveliness than the Swiss, as if the South had touched and mellowed them, as it had the light-colored trousers which in Geneva recalled the joyous pantaloons of Italy. These mountains moulded themselves one upon another, and deepened behind their transparent shadows with a thousand dimmer and tenderer dyes in the autumnal foliage. From time to time a village, gray-

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walled, brown-roofed, broke the low shelving shore of the lake, where the poplars rose and the vineyards spread with a monotony that somehow pleased; and at Nyon a twelfth-century castle, as noble as Chillon, offered the delight of its changing lines as the boat approached and passed.

At Geneva we had barely time to think Rousseau, to think Calvin, to think Voltaire, to drive swiftly through the town and back again to the boat, fuming and fretting to be off. There is an old town, gravely picturesque and austerely fine in its fine old burgherly, Calvinistic, exclusive way; and outside the walls there is a new town, very clean, very cold, very quiet, with horse-cars like Boston, and a new Renaissance theatre like Paris. The impression remains that Geneva is outwardly a small moralized Bostonian Paris; and I suppose the reader knows that it has had its political rings and bosses like New York. It also has an exact reproduction of the Veronese tombs of the Scaligeri, which the eccentric Duke of Brunswick, who died in Geneva, willed it the money to build; like most fac-similes, they are easily distinguishable from the orig-

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inal, and you must still go to Verona to see the tombs of the Scaligeri. But they have the real Mont Blanc at Geneva, bleak to the eye with enduring snow, and the Blue Rhone, rushing smooth and swift under the overhanging balconies of quaint old houses. With its neat quays, azure lake, symmetrical hotel fronts, and white steamboats, Geneva was like an admirable illustration printed in colors, for a holiday number, to imitate a water-color sketch.

When we started we were detained a moment by conjugal affection. A lady, who had already kept the boat waiting, stopped midway up the gang-plank to kiss her husband in parting, in spite of the captain's loud cries of "Allez! Allez!" and the angry derision of the passengers. We were in fact all furious, and it was as much as a mule team with bells, drawing a wagon loaded with bags of flower, and a tree growing out of a tower beside the lake, could do to put me in good-humor. Yet I was not really in a hurry to have the voyage end; I was enjoying every moment of it, only, when your boat starts, you do not want to stop for a woman to kiss her husband.

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Again we were passing the wild Savoyard shore, where the yellow tops of the poplars jutted up like spires from the road-sides, and on the hill-sides tracts of dark evergreens blotted their space out of the vaster expanses of autumn foliage; back of all rose gray cliffs and crags. Now and then we met a boat of our line; otherwise the blue stretch of the water was broken only by the lateen-sails of the black-hulked lake craft. At that season the delicate flame of the Virginia-creeper was a prominent tint on the walls all round the lake.

Lausanne, which made us think Gibbon, of course, was a stately stretch of architecture along her terraces; Vevay showed us her quaint market square, and her old church on its heights; then came Montreux with its many-hotelled slopes and levels, and chalets peeping from the brows of the mountains that crowd it upon the lake. All these places keep multitudes of swans, whose snow reddened in the sunset that stained the water more and more darkly crimson till we landed at Villeneuve.

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VIII

When December came, and the vintage and elections were over, and the winter had come down into the valley to stay, Italy called to us more and more appealingly.

Yet it was not so easy to pull up and go. I liked the row-boat on the lake, though it was getting too cold and rough for that; I liked the way the railway guards called out "Verney-Montreux!" and "Territey-Chillon!" as they ran alongside the carriages at these stations; I liked the pastel portraits of mademoiselle's grandmothers on the gray walls of our pretty chamber that overlooked the lake, and overheard the lightest lisp of that sometimes bellowing body of water; I liked the notion of the wild-ducks among the reeds by the Rhone, though I had no wish to kill them; I liked our little corner fireplace, where I covered a log of the *grand bois* every night in the coals, and found it a perfect line of bristling embers in the morning; I liked Poppi and the three generations of Boulettes; and, yes, I liked mademoiselle and all her boarders; and I hated to leave

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these friends. Mademoiselle made a grand Thanksgiving supper in honor of the American nation, for which we did our bèst to figure both at the table, where smoked a turkey driven over the Alps from his Italian home for that fête (there are no Swiss turkeys), and in the dance, for which he had wellnigh disabled us. Poppi was in uncommon tune that night, and the voice of this pensive rheumatic lent a unique interest to every change of the Virginia reel.

But these pleasures had to end; it grew colder and colder; we had long since consumed all the old grape-roots which constituted our *petit bois*, and we were ravaging our way through an expensive pile of *grand bois* without much effect upon the climate. One morning the most enterprising spirit of our party kindled such a mighty blaze on our chamber hearth that she set the chimney on fire, thus threatening the Swiss republic with the loss of the insurance, and involving mademoiselle in I know not what penalties for having a chimney that could be set on fire. By the blessing of Heaven, the vigor of mademoiselle, and the activity of Louis and Alexis the farmer, the flames

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were subdued and the house saved. Mademoiselle forgave us, but we knew it was time to go, and the next Sunday we were in Florence.

THE END

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